

Hawaii Association of the Blind Newsletter

May 1, 2023

Summer Reading Challenge Library for the Blind and Print Disabled's Summer Program

The theme is E Heluhelu Kakou: Let's Read! Summer Reading Challenge 2023: Seeds of Knowledge.

The program is still in the planning stages and more information will be forthcoming.

Program runs June 1 through July 31

The program is designed to get people reading, and especially to celebrate Hawaii-related information about our islands, people, culture and heritage, literature, history, food, and the arts. However, to participate in the program any kind of reading is ok. There will be a grand prize again this year, four Alaska Airlines tickets, and next-tier prizes at each age level for children, teens, and adults.

If you are interested, stay tune and we will share more as we get the details.

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My Convention Question – Your Answer

By Rita Porter

Together We Can: Honoring the Past, Treasuring the Present, Influencing the Future.

At the 2023 HAB State Convention whose theme was, "Together We Can" we dove right into business (or should I say we quacked, neighed, cock-a-doodle-doed, woof-woofed etc.?) We explored the meaning of these three topics and we brainstormed how to achieve these goals.

While we focused seriously in each timed session, we also enjoyed interacting, learning about each other and creating a range of thoughtful and inspiring ideas. I hope to see these ideas compiled and implemented. It was truly impressive.

At my assigned Dog Table, we were fortunate to have an original member, Nora Ota, describe some of her experiences in the very early days and talk about how meeting with a group of friends was fun and important to her, and she especially liked the intimacy of the small group where everyone knew everyone else but she was concerned about losing this as the group evolved and grew. As we worked through Honoring the Past, Treasuring the Present and Influencing the Future, I liked how unique and valued everyone's knowledge, vision and contributions were.

Listening to each person in my group, I asked myself, "What is the key, or core value that holds HABs past, present and future together?" and "Why do we chose to be here and enjoy working hard together?"

Hearing the excellent lists of suggestions read by the note-takers from each group, I wondered, "Is there anything special about HAB that we need to cherish as we plan for the future?"

A realization: The answer was in what Nora described and did not want to lose. But it was also at the first HAB Convention I visited in 2016. Let me explain...

In 2016, the blind community was new to me. I am sighted but was avalanched by information and drowning in alphabet soup. Do you remember trying to figure out ACB, HAB (no, it's not HBA!), BARD, SB-this and HB-that, GDH, LBPH (now LBPD), VR, DVR, VIP, OIB, O&M, OMG!!! It was in this lost state that I found the HAB website, called the phone number and suddenly something changed significantly. The person at the other end walked me through the usual convention details, time, place, cost, parking. But then she said something that I will never forget, "When you get there, ask for me, Landa Phelan, I really want to meet you. Make sure you find me and say 'Hello'." Just hearing those kind words really touched me. Later, on the morning of the convention I was uncomfortable walking alone into the large meeting room at the Pagoda when I spotted a lively lady helping lots of people find coffee, tea and pastries - Landa. She was so busy, but the fact that she took a minute to welcome me graciously

and sincerely was so unexpected. She never knew this small thing on her part made a big difference to me.

So, The Question – what is the core value from the past – what do we need to cherish in the future?

And, The Answer – it was what Nora described – simply a group of friends who began meeting; and it was Landa’s warm aloha. It was present in each member in the room at this year’s 2023 convention too. It is the warm human connection. Call it friendship or aloha.

It is also one way we can honor the past and carry its value into the future– yes, we created a big list of wonderful ideas to influence the future and will use exciting new tools and skills. But yes, let’s honor HABs history, legacy and positive energy by keeping this original core value, the small human thing that always makes a big difference.

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Your Greatest Dream

By Kenneth Semien, Sr.

Your greatest dream can be achieved with a goal, vision, and determination.

Small steps in the right direction will get you to your destination.

You can begin by identifying sources of inspiration and gathering the necessary tools.

Then create some guidelines and activate effective monitoring rules.

Be sure to include an "I Can" attitude, commitment, and perseverance.

Then add a hefty dose of energy, enthusiasm, and adherence.

Be careful not to dwell on the presence of fear, doubt, or procrastination.

Involve the experience and expertise of others with similar aspirations.

One key to always remember is that great achievers never do it alone.

Therefore, surround yourself with people of character, integrity, and solidity like stone.

In the midst of adversity, there are opportunities for you to shine.

Just continue to tackle challenges with an open mind.

Naysayers and times of uncertainty are sure to come.

Nevertheless, you must believe that you have already won.

All of the above elements are essential to your success.

Know that you have what it takes and be encouraged to give it your best

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A Story about how the Little Things can make a Big Difference

By Terri-Lynn Higashi

Most mornings my coworker buys a big cup of ice from 7-11. One of my favorite things is ice cold water. As I come into the office daily, she asks me would you like some ice? That little act of kindness always reminds me that it doesn't take much to express kindness and generosity. It brightens my morning as we share the ice. Just the thought that someone took the time to know about you and not only thought of their needs but yours as well is so uncommon these days. It is the little things, the little gestures in life that leave a big impact in people's hearts. Simple acts of kindness may be all that it takes to make a difference in one's day.

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A Woman filled with Love and Determination.

By Terri-lynn Higashi

People have asked me to share about my mom. I thought it would be appropriate to tell a little about her as May is Mother's Day and it would be a good way to remember her.

My mother Margaret Masae Higashi grew up in the Ewa Plantation. She is the second youngest daughter of Masao and Kiyoko Higashi. She grew up on the plantation and she liked going to Japanese school and riding horses. Mom's mother Kiyoko died when mom was about 12 years old. She often took care of her youngest sister Jane. Even at a young age, she helped to take care of her family that she loved very much. Mom was very smart and wanted to be a nurse one day. She was a member of the medical club at her high school. Mom attended Kapiolani Community College and aspired to be a nurse. In her early twenties her dad got sick and needed dialysis, so she learned how to do that and worked in dialysis for over 30 years.

Mom was such a diligent worker often working several 10–12-hour shifts in a week. The only day she was ever off was on Sunday. I was always happy on Sunday because she would do her grocery shopping, but also buy me treats from the local Hello Kitty Shop. She was such a giving person and she found joy in doing it. Even in the hospital she would try to give me her egg sandwiches because she knew it was my favorite. She was also a good cook and would make the best pot roast, Korean chicken, and ham. She surely had a lot of patience as I remember she took out that ham and basted it at least 3 to 4 times to cook it well.

The lessons mom tried to instill in me growing up were to get a good education and make something of yourself. I remember she used to tell me "No need go work just finish school and she would be happy." I never realized how lucky I was because most parents were telling their kids to go

out and get jobs. She also taught me to have a good work ethic. I remember one time she asked me “you not going work?” I told her “Nope I no like today.” She rebuked me and told me “You better go to work.” Immediately, I got up and went to work. Overall, what I miss about her most is just her huge heart and the love she had for people. She loved talking and being with people. When she retired, she would call some of her friends daily and loved watching tv game shows. She liked to converse with the people of HAB and attend all the parties we had as an organization and she always found ways to help. She would always be resourcing people about ways of taking care of their kidney and health.

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Zappar Creates Accessible QR codes For Visually Impaired Shoppers

From tech-vi@groups.io

Zappar, a UK based company has come up with a new accessible QR code solution that will help blind and partially sighted people access product information on store shelves and in cabinets at home relatively quickly.

<https://assistivetechblog.com/2023/04/accessible-qr-code.html/960x0>

“Accessible QR” brings a slight modification to the regular QR code that we are all familiar with by including a unique, patent pending D3 “dot-dot-dash” pattern around it. This pattern increases the scanning distance of a standard QR code by 7x, enabling visually impaired people to find the information they are looking for from a much farther distance. The accessible QR code not only identifies the product but also provides all the product details in a structured way that can be easily read by VoiceOver. To read these QR codes effectively, Zappar has introduced a new app called Zapvision.

The real challenge in a retail store is not just scanning a single product but also dealing with the complexity of many products and QR codes being recognized but the phone camera. Zapvision takes care of that issue by identifying all the products in a camera view and giving the user ability to find details of the product they are more interested in.

This new accessible QR code requires a simple print change yet significantly enhances the QR code scanning experience and makes it a lot more accessible. Sighted user are still able to scan these codes with their regular phone camera without any change in their experience.

Accessible QR codes are now on packaging for Unilever brands Persia capsules and Ultimate Liquids in the UK. Unilever and Zappar won the Best in Class award for "IOU Universal Design" at the packaging PAC Global Awards.

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HAB Pearl Harbor Tour

By Natalie M. Barrett

On Saturday, April 29, 2023, about twenty members of Hawaii Association of the Blind and friends attended a special tour of the Pearl Harbor USS Arizona Memorial. Dr. Brett Oppegaard, professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and principal investigator of the award-winning UniDescription project, was there to oversee the tour.

From <https://unidescription.org/>: "The UniDescription Project primarily focuses our research on improving the processes of creating Audio Description, improving the end products of such description processes, and improving ways in which those products are received by audiences."

Dr. Oppegaard, along with Memorial staff and a mainland guest, wanted to provide a more inclusive tour of the USS Arizona, as well as receive feedback on how and where UniDescription can improve. The morning started with everyone gathering in one room that contained tactile models of a ship, cooking pot with coral, and a old-time Coke bottle. HAB was allowed to feel and explore these objects to hopefully gather a more defined picture of the places and things we would be seeing on our tour.

After spending some time with the models and offering feedback, HAB was escorted to the first leg of the tour. We walked a short stretch and waited in line to board the boat that would take us to the area in which the wall with the names of all the lost sailors have been entombed for over eighty years. It was an awesome day to be on the water. The sun was warm and the soft ocean breeze kept the boat passengers from overheating. At times a soft sea spray would mist your face, providing a relaxing and enjoyable trip.

Once our group disembarked, we were allowed to wander and explore the area to a certain point. There were some areas roped off, but it didn't detract from the place dedicated to the final resting spot of the young men of the USS Arizona. Vickey Kennedy also graciously provided HAB with an orchid to throw into the water to honor those lost souls.

Another boat ride and a short walk, we all arrived at the room in which we started our journey. Our awesome hosts, along with Dr. Oppegaard, used the remaining time to ask questions and receive more feedback now that our tour had concluded. Everyone chipped in with their thanks and comments and appeared happy to have helped and perhaps assist in the future.

Once we all were able to go our separate ways, Dr. Oppegaard made time for HAB members to have their picture taken so that it could be describe and used for such things like resumes or social media profiles.

The Hawaii Association of the Blind thank Dr. Oppegaard for continuing to include our organization in their mission of audio description and look forward to many more collaborations.

Letter from Dr. Oppegaard on USS Arizona tour

Aloha, all,

From the feedback I've heard so far, HAB members had a great time at Pearl Harbor on Saturday and are eager to return in the near future to continue helping to make the site more accessible (thank you, again, David, for making this opportunity happen!); in the meantime, while we are crunching the research data and figuring out what it all means, if you have any additional thoughts about your experiences at the site during this event or how the U.S.S. Arizona/Pearl Harbor could be more accessible, please just send those to me via email, and I'm happy to add the comments to the general record and consider them fully. ... Thanks, again, for your participation, and I'll look forward to our next chance to get together and hang out.

Best wishes,

~ Brett